



Tips on Starting a Recycling Program at Your School

City of San José Go Green Schools Program

- The City of San José Go Green Schools Program (SJGGSP) can provide **free paper and bottle/can recycling containers** and technical assistance in setting up and maintaining your recycling program. San José K-12 public and private schools are eligible for this assistance. We provide preprinted cardboard boxes for paper recycling and heavy duty plastic containers for bottles and cans. These supplies are funded by the state CRV fund from bottle and can redemption values. Starting in Fall 2007, San José schools can request recycling containers on-line and pick them up at RAFT, the Resource Area for Teachers.
- One of the first things we recommend is to **form a team** for your recycling and other green school projects and practices. Ideally the team would include your principal and one or more teachers, parents, students, and custodians. Find team members with enthusiasm for the program. Appoint a coordinator. Plan together what you would like to do and how you will do it. Forming a team will help ensure that the program is sustainable.
- Ensure that you have the **principal's authorization** and support for the recycling program. Involve him or her throughout the process, and keep him or her informed of your successes. Remind the principal that the school and district can save money by recycling.
- Conduct a **waste audit** to identify the kinds of waste the school generates, the volume of materials, and how much could be recycled, re-used, reduced or eliminated in future.
- **Start small and simple**, and build on your successes. It's better to start small and grow than to start big and get overwhelmed and give up. Many schools start with recycling paper first, then when they feel confident add bottles and cans. At a more advanced level, you might even want to consider recycling lunch and other food waste. Also, a number of schools recycle cell phones and ink cartridges as fundraisers.
- Find out which **hauler company** removes the school's trash. The hauler contract will probably be managed at the school district office. A comprehensive list of haulers licensed to provide services to businesses and schools can be found at: www.sjrecycles.org/business/rec_haul.htm.

Find out if the hauler contract includes pick up of paper and bottles/cans for recycling.

- ⇒ If the contract provides for recycling, find out how many times a week they will pick up your recyclables, and when those pick-ups can be scheduled.
- ⇒ If recycling pick-up is not included in the contract, it might be possible to amend it to add recycling services or ensure that they get added in the next contract. The San José Go Green Schools Program can help with contract language ideas.

- You may also arrange to have the **San Jose Conservation Corps** pick up your recycling bottles and cans, and your paper recycling if you are also recycling bottles/cans. They have a government grant to provide this service for free to public schools. They can be reached at: 408-283-7171 or at www.sjcccharterschool.org



- Also, if you wish to keep the bottle and can redemption monies for school use, you may take them to **redemption recycling centers** that will pay you for aluminum, glass, and plastic. Recruit a few parents and teachers who are willing to transport the recyclables on a regular basis to the center. Contact the Santa Clara County Recycling Hotline at 1-800-533-8414 or visit www.recyclestuff.org to find a location near you.
- Organize your **collection process**. Coordinate with the custodian and involve him/her in the process. Create a student collection team. Recruit volunteers from the campus Environmental or Science Club, or have it be part of a service learning project or curriculum.
 - ⇒ For **paper**, determine where the recyclables will be stored before they are picked up by the hauler or volunteers. The student collection team would take the paper boxes to this central collection point on a routine basis, twice weekly or more often as needed.
 - ⇒ For **bottles and cans**, decide where the recyclables will be stored before they are either picked up or taken to a redemption center. Safeguard against attracting insects and rodents by keeping them in an enclosed area and by arranging to have them picked up on a weekly or more frequent basis. Line the individual bottle and can recycling bins with reusable liner bags to help keep the bins clean. The student collection team would take the bottles and cans to the central collection point on a routine basis, daily or at least twice weekly as needed.
- If you have a sufficient quantity of paper, there are **paper recycling companies** that will buy the paper from you and maybe even pick it up. Contact Smurfit Stone, 408-975-1314, for more information.
- Some other tips that are simple but result in **big paper savings**:
 - ⇒ Set up copiers to **copy double sided**. Have the principal set a policy that school copies should all be double sided. This should include students' reports.
 - ⇒ Put out a **One-Sided Copies box near copiers** (and recycle containers when you get them) to capture one-sided discarded paper and reuse it for draft copies, scratch pads, or art projects.
 - ⇒ Send a fax with a **post-it note fax transmittal form** rather than using an extra sheet of paper.
- Always **put the recycling containers right next to the garbage cans**. Make sure they are clearly **marked as recycling**, and describe what can be recycled in them. Have the students decorate them—you could even have a school-wide contest.
- Hold a **school-wide recycling kickoff or assembly**. Create your own presentation, involving the students in creative ways to promote recycling. Also, there are a number of affordable local entertainers who specialize in promoting recycling and other green practices and who could appear at a school-wide recycling kickoff or assembly: the Banana Slug String Band and Zun-Zun are two.
- Be part of an international schools environmental movement and gain invaluable resources and public recognition: register as a **Go Green School** with the Go Green Initiative: www.gogreeninitiative.org.

For further assistance in **obtaining free recycling containers or help** in starting a school recycling program, or for information on other environmental resources for schools, please contact:

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